

## Fermented and Dried Meats Workshop at Cornell Targets Small-Scale Entrepreneurs

December 15th, 2000

CONTACT: Linda McCandless, [llm3@cornell.edu](mailto:llm3@cornell.edu), 315-787-2417

by Cheryl Leach & Elizabeth Keller

GENEVA, NY: The latest in a series of hands-on workshops, "Good Manufacturing Practices for Fermented Meats (sausage) and Dried Meats (jerky)," was held at the Meats Facility in Morrison Hall, Cornell University, on December 8. The program was sponsored by the Northeast Center for Food Entrepreneurship (NECFE), Cornell Cooperative Extension, the Cornell Department of Food Science & Technology, the Cornell Department of Animal Science, and the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. The 18 participants included small-scale processors of specialty meats and farmers interested in the small-scale meat manufacturing business.

Denny Shaw of the Department of Animal Science, Cornell University, was the instructor for the morning session. Topics included: definitions of Fermented Sausage and Dried Meat products according to standards of identity; Good Manufacturing Practices for the production of both meat product types; microbial concerns regarding meat processing; and critical control points including pH, water activity, and temperature. Casing issues were addressed and the use of Starter Culture for accurate, safe, fermentation was emphasized.

Assisting in the instruction were Larry Decker, of the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, and Olga Padilla-Zakour, director of NECFE, Cornell University. Decker provided valuable insight on the regulatory aspects of fermented sausage and dried meat production. He and Padilla-Zakour fielded questions from participants, helping to clarify regulatory and food safety concerns, as well as explaining key terms and procedures associated with the processing of fermented sausages and dried meat products.

During lunch, participants had an opportunity to sample one another's meat products. Afterwards, the hands-on demonstrations of fermented sausage and jerky production began. Shaw covered mixing, grinding, casing choice and stuffing for a pepperoni-type sausage. Low-cost alternatives for small processors were addressed and, where equipment was available, demonstrated. At one point, participants were invited to try their skill with the hand-operated sausage-stuffing machine. Shaw also took participants through the steps involved in making a marinated beef jerky, including slicing and drying.

Padilla-Zakour demonstrated the use of a water activity meter and a pH meter on meat products. The measurements were discussed from both food quality and food safety perspectives. Decker added information on proper food handling and kitchen requirements, and clarified labeling regulations pertaining to the use of liquid and natural smokes.

Response to the program was very positive. Further offerings of the Meats Workshop, to be held near Albany or New York City, are under serious consideration.

Future NECFE-sponsored programs include: "Tilling the Soil of Opportunity", a practical training using NxLevel Agricultural Entrepreneurship Curriculum offered at the Food Research Laboratory, at Cornell University's New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, in Geneva, NY, on January 9-10, Jan. 23-24, and Feb. 20-21, 2001; "A Taste of Specialty Foods," presented at the 2001 Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference in Owego, NY, on February 5, 2001; "Food Safety for the Entrepreneur," offered March 22, 2001, in Burlington, Vermont; and the Better Process Control School in Geneva, NY, May 7-10, 2001.

For further information, or to ask about scheduling programs in your area, contact the Northeast Center for Food Entrepreneurship toll free, at 1-888-624-6785, locally at 315-787-2274 or through the web at [www.nysaes.cornell.edu/necfe](http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/necfe).

###

Contact Webmaster: [webmaster@nvsaes.cornell.edu](mailto:webmaster@nvsaes.cornell.edu)